

Reflux and cough

COUGH FREQUENCY AND MORBIDITY IN INPATIENTS WITH ACUTE RESPIRATORY DISEASE

1RD Turner, 2 SS Birring, 3 S Matos, 1GH Bothamley; 1Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK; 2King’s College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK; 3Institute of Electronics and Telematics Engineering, University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal

Introduction Cough is the unique respiratory symptom. Although associated with a range of conditions it has been little studied in acute respiratory disease. We describe cough frequency and cough-related quality of life in this group.

Method Participants had a diagnosis of acute exacerbation of asthma (asthma), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (AECOPD), or lower respiratory tract infection (including community-acquired pneumonia) in the absence of the other respiratory disease (LRTI). Quality of life was measured with the Leicester Cough Questionnaire (LCQ-acute), cough severity with a visual analogue scale (VAS), and 24-hour cough frequency with the Leicester Cough Monitor.

Results 40 patients were recruited within a median (interquartile range) of 1 (1–2.3) day ( ) of hospital admission. Median (IQR) age was 57 (41–71) and 63% were female. Geometric mean ± log_{10} SD cough frequency was high: 19.7 ± 1.36, 33.8 ± 2.02 and 23.6 ± 3.1 coughs/h for asthma (n = 11), AECOPD (n = 15) and LRTI (n = 14) respectively (Figure); median (IQR) cough bouts/24h: 81 (54–210), 148 (97–197) and 129 (67–197). There was no significant difference between disease groups in these values (p > 0.05 for all two-way comparisons). Diurnal variation and median numbers of coughs/hour were similar between groups. The 48% of patients who were current smokers coughed more than non-smokers (33.6 ± 1.9 vs 20.2 ± 1.38 coughs/h, p = 0.07). No difference in cough frequency was detected amongst the 25% taking angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors. Gender had no significant overall effect.

Median (IQR) VAS scores were 39 (32–86), 73 (53–100) and 82 (48–91) for asthma, AECOPD and LRTI respectively with no significant difference between them. Cough severity showed a significant correlation with 24-hour cough frequency overall (Spearman’s coefficient 0.33, p = 0.05). LCQ-acute scores were lower for LRTI (8.4; 6.4–9.5) than asthma (14.7; 10.7–17.5); p = 0.01 (Figure 1). Neither was significantly different from those for AECOPD (11.5; 8.5–15.6). Quality of life did not correlate with cough frequency (Spearman’s coefficient -0.13; p = 0.48).

Conclusion Cough frequency in acute respiratory disease is high but with high variation. Cough frequency accounts for only part of morbidity in these conditions.

SALIVARY PEPsin AS A BIOMARKER OF AIRWAY REFlUX IN IDIOPATHIC PULMONARY FIBROSIS - AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY

1JM Dudziak, 2MG Crooks, 3AD Woodcock, 4PW Dettmar, 5AH Morice, 2SP Hart; 1Academic Respiratory Medicine, Castle Hill Hospital, Cottingham, UK; 2Centre for Cardiovascular and Metabolic Research, Hull York Medical School, Hull, UK; 3RD Biomed Ltd, Castle Hill Hospital, Cottingham, UK

Introduction and Objectives Current understanding of IPF proposes repetitive pulmonary epithelial injury with aberrant healing as a principal mechanism. Gastro-oesophageal reflux (GOR) and micro-aspiration of gastric contents may cause lung injury with subsequent fibrosis, and GOR is known to be prevalent in IPF patients. We assessed the feasibility of salivary pepsin measurement in IPF patients and investigated the temporal variability and relationship between salivary pepsin and symptoms.

Methods IPF patients collected saliva samples at multiple time points over the course of one day. Early morning, lunch- and dinner-time samples were analysed and compared with results from a historical control group of 100 healthy volunteers. Samples were analysed for the presence of pepsin using Peptest™ (RD Biomed Ltd). Patients were defined as pepsin positive if they had pepsin detectable in at least 1 saliva sample. The St George’s Respiratory Questionnaire (SQRQ), Hull Airways Reflux Questionnaire (HARQ), and the REFLUX questionnaire were used to assess the relationship between pepsin positivity and symptoms.

Results All 21 IPF patients successfully provided saliva samples, of which 17 patients (81%) were pepsin positive compared to 36 of 100 healthy volunteers (36%), p = 0.004. The proportion of
PEPSIN DETECTION DESPITE THE USE OF ACID SUPPRESSANT MEDICATION IN PATIENTS WITH AIRWAY REFUX RELATED CHRONIC COUGH

1GL Crossfield, 2W Jackson, 3J Burke, 4AD Woodcock, 5V Srugula, 6C Ward, 7IP Pearson, 8PW Dettmar, 9AH Morice; 1Institute of Cell and Molecular Biosciences, Newcastle Upon Tyne, United Kingdom; 2Gastro-Intestinal Physiology Laboratory, Hull, United Kingdom; 3Technologies Ltd, Hull, United Kingdom; 4Institute of Cellular Medicine, Newcastle Upon Tyne, United Kingdom; 5Cardiovascular and Respiratory Studies, East Yorkshire, United Kingdom

Background Chronic cough (CC) is an increasing problem that is not easy to treat with medication. Associated symptoms include hoarse voice, dysphonia, persistent tickling and irritation of the throat or chest. These lead to poor sleeping and eating patterns, loss of vocal independence and social isolation all resulting in an impaired quality of life. Airway reflux is a common cause of unexplained chronic cough and proton pump inhibitor (PPI) medication is commonly prescribed as initial therapy. The following study assessed pepsin identification in CC patients as a marker of airway reflux on PPI.

Methods Symptomatic expectorated saliva samples were obtained from 16 patients (6 male/10 female, 50 years (37–76), Body Mass Index (BMI) 30 (24–44), median (range)) attending clinical appointment. 300 similar pepsin assays from 100 healthy subjects with no typical or atypical reflux symptoms. In this group only 6 of 300 samples had more than 250 ng/ml of pepsin measured and 64% had all three samples negative for pepsin.7 This is shown in table 1. The median HARQ score was 30 (range 1–67). Conclusion A high proportion of patients with chronic cough have demonstrable levels of pepsin in expectorated saliva at the time of having symptoms. This non invasive test may be a useful investigation to support the diagnosis of airway reflux.

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<tr>
<th>Pepsin level &gt;250 ng/ml</th>
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<td>At least one sample positive</td>
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<td>Chronic cough patients</td>
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<td>Healthy volunteers</td>
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Abstract S32 Table 1. Test results for pepsin in patients with chronic cough compared to healthy volunteers